

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

DECEMBER 19, 2005

WEST FRANKFORT WOMAN CHARGED IN DRUG-RELATED DEATH

Edward E. McNally, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, announced today that a cooperative effort with Franklin County, Illinois State's Attorney Thomas J. Dinn resulted in a West Frankfort woman being charged with providing a powerful synthetic opiate to a West Frankfort girl that later led to the girl's death. **JENNIFER LYNN KRIEGER**, 37, of West Frankfort, Illinois was charged in a federal criminal complaint with distribution of fentanyl resulting in death. A complaint is a formal charge against a defendant. Under the law, a defendant is presumed to be innocent of a charge until proved guilty beyond a reasonable doubt to the satisfaction of a jury.

Franklin County State's Attorney Tom Dinn noted the charges were being pursued federally because of the stiff penalty provided by federal law for those who distribute drugs resulting in death. The federal offense carries a penalty of not less than 20 years' imprisonment up to life, a fine of up to \$1,000,000 and a term of 3 years supervised release.

According to the complaint, **KRIEGER** provided the fentanyl to the West Frankfort 19 year-old by providing her a Duragesic gel patch. Duragesic patches contain fentanyl which is a powerful synthetic opiate, 100 times more potent than morphine. The patches are supposed to be used for chronic pain relief. McNally and Dinn further noted, however, that there has been an increasing and alarming trend in Franklin County and the rest of southern Illinois of people abusing the patches by chewing on them or injecting their contents intravenously. McNally and Dinn further expressed their hope that this case would raise public awareness regarding the dangers of misusing fentanyl patches and the potential stiff penalties that are possible for those who distribute the patches.

The investigation was conducted by the West Frankfort Police Department, the Illinois State Police, the Franklin County State's Attorney, the COMIT Drug Task Force, and the Drug Enforcement Administration.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Tom Leggans.